

CONGRATULATING COLONEL ELLIS  
AS HE IS HONORED BY THE  
TOBYHANNA ARMY DEPOT OF  
MONROE COUNTY

### HON. PAUL E. KANJORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 12, 2006*

Mr. KANJORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask you and my esteemed colleagues in the House of Representatives to pay tribute to COL Tracy L. Ellis, who has commanded the Tobyhanna Army Depot in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, from July 31, 2003 to July 20, 2006, when he will turn over command to COL Ronald Alberto.

The Tobyhanna Army Depot is the Nation's largest repair station for military communications equipment and weapons targeting systems. It employs more than 3,000 people and circulates more than \$450 million each year to the local economy.

Under Colonel Ellis' command, mission workload surged by 40 percent between 2003 and 2004 and 60 percent between 2003 and 2005. The depot effectively incorporated hundreds of new employees to meet the expanded workload.

The depot also expanded maintenance support of other critical systems including aircraft survivability equipment, aircrew survival radios, secure communications equipment, air defense and air traffic control, landing systems and tactical satellite communications systems.

Tobyhanna Army Depot effectively prepared for the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, and will gain new missions from two other installations as a result.

During his command tour, Colonel Ellis added to Tobyhanna's environmental stewardship, winning the Secretary of the Army Environmental Quality Award in both 2004 and 2005. The 2005 award recognized the depot for pollution prevention in the industrial installation category for recycling more than 40 percent of the solid waste generated annually.

The depot's special employment programs earned further recognition with receipt of the 2003 Army Disability Program of the Year Award.

Colonel Ellis also directed that the depot's Army Community Services program allot its limited resources to provide maximum assistance to the large National Guard and Reserve population surrounding the installation. ACS has conducted many briefings for hundreds of families of military personnel before, during and after their deployments.

Colonel Ellis' command of Tobyhanna Army Depot is one marked by rapid increases in maintenance production, growth of depot employees, innovation and improvement in business and production management and sustained performance in environmental stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating Colonel Ellis on a job well done. His devotion to duty and country as well as his commitment to excellence have bolstered the already superb reputation of the Tobyhanna Army Depot as an indispensable resource for the American Armed Forces, and insured that the depot will remain a key element in the region's economic well-being.

THE BOOMERS HAVE ARRIVED—  
JIM GHIEMMETTI TURNING 60

### HON. GEORGE MILLER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 12, 2006*

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, this Saturday night I will join the many friends of Jim Ghielmetti in celebrating an event that millions of Americans will share over the coming years. The baby boomers are turning 60, and there is nothing they can do about it. Jim's birthday is May 15th, but I think his wonderful wife Laurie wanted to give him a few months to adjust before he faced his many friends who will gather in San Francisco to wish him well. I share a May birthday but a year earlier so I had the pleasure of being ahead of Jim and the boomers.

It has now been almost 30 years since I was introduced to a young builder in my congressional district. Sid Lippow, our mutual friend who introduced us, said that he thought it was important for us to get to know one another. He said that we could give balance to each other and that we were the future of our professions, me in politics and Jim in homebuilding. But as Sid said, Jim was about building more than homes, he was building communities.

For these 30 years we have indeed added balance to one another. Most of the time after long debates over a wide range of issues, from endangered species, the future of Social Security, community planning, the right level of taxation, and so many other topics. We have argued about them in one another's homes, in restaurants and at the kids' soccer games. Through it all we have remained the best of friends.

Jim Ghielmetti has come a long way since those early days when he was learning his profession while working for Shapell Industries of Northern California. In 1983 he struck out on his own and founded Signature Properties. Today, under his leadership, the company has built more than 6,000 homes, with another 3,500 homes currently in the planning or design phases. Signature is well known throughout the greater Bay Area and Sacramento regions for its diverse product offerings in both urban and suburban settings, its commercial and mixed-use projects and its master-planned communities.

True to my first introduction to Jim, he was building more than houses. He has given an extraordinary amount of his time to making the Bay Area a better community. Since 1994, Jim Ghielmetti has focused on local transportation issues by chairing the Transportation Committee of the Tri-Valley Business Council. The Transportation Committee addresses such issues as toll roads, Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) expansion to the Tri-Valley area and obtaining matching federal funds for expansion of Interstates 580 and 680.

For the last 5 years, Jim has served on the Board of Directors of the Bay Area Council. The Bay Area Council is an organization that aggressively addresses the challenges that affect the economic well-being and quality of life in the nine Bay Area counties. He also serves on the Executive Committee of the Policy Advisory Board for the Fisher Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics at the University of California, Berkeley. In 2000, Jim served on

the Governor's Commission for the 21st Century, a group charged with developing a blueprint for California to follow in addressing transportation, housing, environmental and other issues of the 21st century. In 2003, Jim was appointed to the California State Transportation Commission.

Jim Ghielmetti has been an outstanding citizen participant in the public policy debates in our region and in our State.

Homebuilding is what Jim Ghielmetti does, but his family tells us who he is. Jim and his wife Laurie, a very successful businesswoman in the design field, have been partners in life and in business. They have raised two great sons, Michael and Brian, and recently a grandson Matteo. Michael, specializing in creative urban infill, is working with Jim at Signature Properties, and Brian is in New York doing urban renovations. Jim and Laurie and all of us are very proud of them both.

These are just some of the reasons why so many of Jim's friends will be coming together to wish him a very happy birthday with so many more to come. This birthday may be a shock to Jim, but I can assure him that all of us are very glad that he has had these 60 years and wish him many more to come.

### THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT REAUTHORIZATION AND AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2006

### HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 12, 2006*

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be a sponsor of H.R. 9, "The Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006." This legislation compliments the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965, which is considered to be among the greatest legislative accomplishments in our nation's history. Often referred to as the "Crown Jewel" of America's civil rights laws, the Act memorializes those who marched, struggled and even died to secure the right for all Americans to vote.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed just months after the historic Selma to Montgomery march and remains a lasting achievement of the Civil Rights movement. It helped to change the face of Southern politics in ways we could hardly imagine. In Alabama, in the space of only one year after the Act became law, black voter registration practically doubled from 116,000 in August 1965 to 228,000 in August, 1966. By 1990, there were more than 7,300 black elected officials nationwide, including the governor of Virginia. The Act produced black Members of Congress from Alabama, Florida and North Carolina for the first time since Reconstruction. Rural black voters in Georgia and Louisiana sent black representatives to Congress as well.

One of the more meaningful provisions of the Act called for the placement of federal referees and monitors in counties with a clear practice of disenfranchisement. There were and still are subtle tools to discourage blacks, other minorities and poor people from voting. Local political establishments still use many of the same tactics: annexation ineligibility; purging voter lists; relocating polling places; the